Amendments to the Specification

Please replace paragraph 595 with the following amended paragraph:

[0595] The β-galactosidase cDNA of the expression vector pCMV-β (Clontech, Palo Alto, Calif., USA, Gene Bank Accession No. UO2451) may be deleted by digestion with the restriction endonuclease NotI and replaced with a multiple cloning site containing, from the 5' end to the 3' end, the following sites: NotI, AscI, RsrII, AvrII, SwaI, and NotI, cloned at the region of the NotI restriction site. The sequence of this multiple cloning site is: 5'-CGGCCGCGGCGCGCCCGGACCGCCTAGGATTTAAATCGCGGCCCGCG-3' (SEQ ID NO:39).

Please replace paragraph 598 with the following amended paragraph:

[0598] A multiple cloning site comprising, from the 5' end to the 3 end the XbaI, EcoRI, SfiI, PmeI, NheI, SrfI, PacI, SalI and XbaI restriction sites having the sequence: 5'CTCTAGAATTCGGCCTCCGTGGCCGTTTAAACGCTAGCGCCCGG- GCTTAATTAAGTCGACTCTAGAGC-3' (SEQ ID NO:40), may be inserted at the level of the XbaI site (nucleotide at position 3329) of the vector pXCXII (McKinnon et al., 1982, Gene 19:33; McGrory et al., 1988, Virology, 163:614).

Please replace paragraph 571 with the following amended paragraph:

[0571] An electronic analysis of tissue distribution has been performed. The sequence of the transcript ~~(SEQ ID Nº 1-4)~~ SEQ ID NOS: 1-4 matches with 6 different Incyte templates numbered 54714.1, 1337198.1, 88352.1, 1337102.1, 222677.1, and 385780.1 (Incyte template September 2000 database [LGTemplatesSEP2000]) that are constituted of 5, 1, 2, 1, 14, and 1 ESTs respectively. The tissue origin of all these ESTs may suggest a preferential skin/epithelial cell expression (12 ESTs over 24 come from squamous cells, epithelial cells, or skin) of ABCA12 transcript.

Please replace paragraph 549 with the following amended paragraph:

[0549] According to a third aspect, the cells may be cells having a natural deficiency in anion transport, or cells pretreated with one or more anion channel inhibitors such as ~~Verapamil™~~ verapamil or tetraethylammonium.

Please replace paragraph 560 with the following amended paragraph:

[0560] In a total volume of 11.5 µl, 500 ng of mRNA poly(A)+ (Clontech) mixed with 500 ng of oligodT are denaturated at 70º C. for 10 min and then chilled on ice. After addition of 10 units of RNAsin, 10 mM DTT, 0.5 mM dNTP, ~~Superscript~~ SuperScript™ first strand buffer and 200 units of ~~Superscript II~~ SuperScript II™ (Life Technologies), the reaction is incubated for 45 min at 42º C. We used poly(A) mRNA from placenta, testis, and fetal brain.

Please replace paragraph 564 with the following amended paragraph:

[0564] PCR products are analyzed and quantified by agarose gel electrophoresis, purified with a P100 column. Purified PCR products were sequenced using ~~ABI Prism~~ ABI Prism® Big Dye terminator cycle sequencing kit (Perkin Elmer Applied Biosystems). The sequence reaction mixture was purified using Microcon-100 microconcentrators (Amicon, Inc., Beverly). Sequencing reactions were resolved on an ABI 377 DNA sequencer (Perkin Elmer Applied Biosystems) according to manufacturer's protocol (Applied Biosystems, Perkin Elmer).